Import of edible oil

3661. SHRI A. VIJAYA RAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision to import edible oil from abroad;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the details regarding this expected quantity of palmolien to be imported; and

(d) the details of countries from where edible oil is imported?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI RAJIV PRATAP RUDI): (a) to (d) Import of all vegetable edible oils as classified under Chapter 15 of ITC (HS) Classification of Export and Import Items, 1997—2000, is presently free. Import of all refined edible oil excluding coconut oil, Palm Kernel oil, RBD palm oil and RBD palm stearin was made free prior to 1.4.95. Import of various crude edible oils and Palm Kernel oil, RBD palm oil and RBD palm stearin was made free on 31.3.99. Import of crude edible oil was made free to provide for proper utilization of the indigenous processing and refining capacities. Import of coconut oil and copra is presently under State Trading Regime (STR) to be operated through State Trading Corporation (STC).

After removal of restrictions, the imports are made by private entities based on the domestic and international prices and applicable rates of customs duties in response to demand and supply factors. Between April and December 2001, edible oil was imported from the following countries, *viz.* Argentina, Australia, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belgium, Brazil, Chinese Taipei, People's Republic of China, Denmark, France, German Federal Republic, Indonesia, Iran, Italy, Japan, Republic of Korea, Malaysia, Nepal, Netherlands, New Zealand, Panama Republic, Philippines, Poland, Singapore, South Africa, Spain, Switzerland, Thailand, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, Ukraine, United States of America and Vietnam.